REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are pending in the above-identified patent application. Claims 1, 3 and 5 have been amended by way of the present amendment. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,016,350 (Funable et al.) in view of U.S. Publication No. 2002/0073212 (Sokol et al.). Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Claim Rejections

Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Funable et al. in view of Sokol et al. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3 and 5 have been amended to clarify the invention. In particular, claim 1 has been amended to recites:

> bridge means in a data link layer for allowing data, which has been received with one of the plurality of ports and then on which the encrypting or decrypting process has been performed, to be outputted as it is from another port without being performed any routing process.

Claims 3 and 5 have been similarly amended to clarify the relationship between the "bridge means" and the "data link layer." Support for the amendments is provided by the original specification and figures. Thus, the amendments raise no questions of new matter.

Funabe et al. discloses an encryption apparatus enables encrypted communications using existing network equipment which does not have an encryption function, such as a server, a client, or a router.[1] However, Funabe et al. nowhere discloses, as claim 1 recites:

> *bridge means in a data link layer* for allowing data, which has been received with one of the plurality of ports and then on which the encrypting or decrypting process has been performed, to

[1] Funabe et al. at ABSTRACT.

> be outputted as it is from another port without being performed any routing process (emphasis added).

Claims 3 and 5 have been similarly amended. That is, Funabe et al. does not disclose the recited "bridge means in the data link layer" (i.e., a communication device in the data link layer), but instead discloses a communication device in the upper layers (i.e., in the network layer/transport layer) including IXP, RIP, SAP, etc. While a VPN router (i.e., an encryption communication device in the network layer) is the well-known technology/product in general as the encryption communication device located in the transport layer or network layer, the claimed invention realizes an IPsec=IP network encryption communication (i.e., encryption communication in the network layer) as a bridge means (i.e., communication in the data link layer). Thus, Funabe et al. does not disclose all of the limitations of claims 1, 3 and 5.

In addition, the outstanding Office Action acknowledges other deficiencies in Funabe et al. and attempts to overcome these deficiencies by combining Sokol et al. with Funabe et al. However, Sokol et al. cannot overcome all of the deficiencies of Funabe et al., as discussed below.

Sokol et al. discloses a system in accordance with the invention provides a wireless LAN having terminals that require virtually no setup or installation by the user.[2] However, Sokol et al. nowhere discloses, as claim 1 recites:

> *bridge means in a data link layer* for allowing data, which has been received with one of the plurality of ports and then on which the encrypting or decrypting process has been performed, to be outputted as it is from another port without being performed any routing process (emphasis added).

In addition, claims 3 and 5 have been similarly amended. That is, though Sokol et al. discloses a "hub" as a general name including a bridge element, Sokol et al. does not mention IP network encryption communication. That is, Sokol et al. only discloses enhancing usability and privacy

[2] Sokol et al. at ABSTRACT.

by incorporating the personal settings into the smart card in the general communication conversion device, which has no relationship to security. Thus, the communications disclosed by Sokol et al. are not encrypted.

Further, the expressions of "hub" and "bridge" in Sokol et al. do not respectively indicate the "hub" as a communication device located in the physical layer of the OSI reference model and the "bridge" as located in the data link layer, but instead indicate an abstract communication device. In contrast, the "bridge means in the data link layer" in the claimed invention explicitly recites the operations of the OSI reference model layer 2 (i.e., data link layer) and patentably distinguish over the disclosure of Sokol et al.

Thus, Sokol et al. cannot overcome all of the deficiencies of Funabe et al. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that neither Funabe et al. nor Sokol et al., whether taken alone or in combination, disclose, suggest or make obvious the claimed invention and that claims 1, 3 and 5, and claims dependent thereon, patentably distinguish thereover.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 22-0185, under Order No. 22040-00037-US1 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

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